

STATE ADMINISTRATION

Exhibit No. 2Date 2-9-07Bill No. SB-359

To: Chairman Senator Squires

Please enter this testimony in to the record concerning SB 359

My name is Gary Koeplin, I am from the Bitterroot valley and am in opposition to SB 359. To begin with I would like to give you a little bit of my horse racing background. I have been involved in racing all of my life as my parents bred, raised and raced horses back in the 1950s. I was the Executive Secretary The Montana Board of Horse Racing prior to Sam Murfitt, I was the Director of Racing for the Western Montana Fair and Race Meet in Missoula for several years ending in the spring of 2006, and I have been licensed in many different capacities as an official at many different tracks and am currently feeding way to many horses at home.

As I started to read the draft of this bill I thought I would be looking at a piece of legislation that would be working toward the enhancement of horse racing and a tool that would help the tracks and the industry start to grow stronger. What I actually saw was nothing of the sort.

First, by lowering the number of members from seven to five there will be less input from areas around the state.

Second, while I think it is very important that industry members are on the Board, by specifically stating that one member must be in the horse racing breeding industry, this bill will remove Owners and Owners/trainers from the equation. Owners are the individuals that actually pay the bills, buy the horses either from local breeders or from out of state breeders. The way that Senate Bill 359 is written, there is no guidelines for the horse racing breeder that will be on the Board nothing states that they have to have Montana bred horses or even race their horses in Montana or offer them for sale in Montana.

Having somebody from track management on the Board I feel is a good plan. Incidentally the current Board with seven members of which two must be from the horse racing industry allows for the opportunity of all aspects of the industry to sit on the Board, and currently do.

Third, by changing the districts and removing the guidelines that says that members may not be from the same district, will allow for two individuals to be from the same area or may even be from the same town.

Fourth, As for placing The Board of Horse Racing in the Department of Agriculture I see no reason to do this, it makes no sense. It will create an unnecessary

Fifth, By placing in this Bill, a statement that says that the Board shall actively promote horse racing in collaboration with the local tracks, it is confusing what does that mean, as I see no guidelines, and no way to fund any promotion, and no way to create a fund for these promotions. Also why is this Bill stating that the State of Montana and the local tracks are to promote the Breeding industry above all other aspects of the horse racing industry. Just a point of clarity currently all licensed Montana race meets are required now to write races and offer races for only Montana bred horses.

In conclusion, I feel that Senate Bill 359 is poorly written and will do nothing to help the race tracks and the entire racing industry in the State of Montana. I urge you to defeat SB 359 in its current form. Thank You

